NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

THE bulletin

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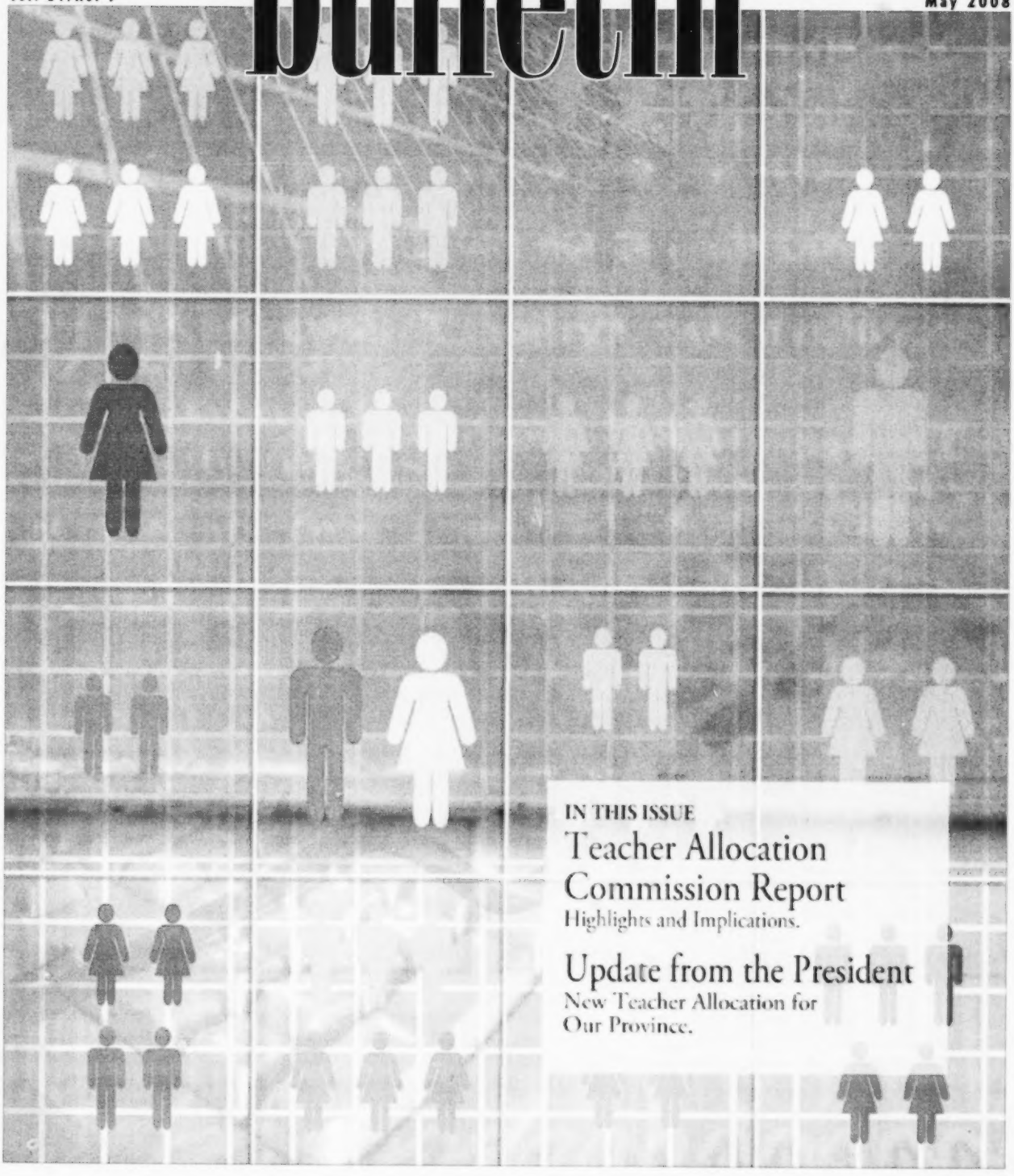

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Teacher Allocation Commission Report

Highlights and Implications.

Update from the President

New Teacher Allocation for Our Province.

Up Front from the President

We now have a new Teacher Allocation Model for our province; one that will add more classroom teachers, specialists and administrators to our system. While the recommendations that the NLTA submitted to the Commission where not all accepted, and while Government has accepted a revised version of a number of the Commission recommendations, we should see a significant improvement in the workload of teachers as the class size maximums and improved allocations are put in place. We also will see a new and improved Math curriculum for K-12 students. Both of these major initiatives will begin to be phased in this coming September 2008. In addition, we are pursuing a schedule for negotiating sessions with the Collective Bargaining Division of Government, as a revised opening package has been prepared and recently approved by your Provincial Executive.

Central to the new allocation model are class size maximums for both single grade and multi-graded classrooms, a new specialist teacher ratio, new allocations for special education and learning resources outside the specialist allocations, and an improved allocation of administrators. In addition, schools may create and avail of a needs-based profile if their baseline allocations do not meet the demands of their entire school program. It is a radical change from the historical method of allocating units to schools which was based only on the pure numbers-driven student-teacher ratio, as there will now exist a needs-based component that may be utilized if improved teacher allocations still don't do the job.

The new class size maximums will provide an additional teaching unit once the maximum has been exceeded. By introducing the idea of a class size maximum instead of the former student-teacher ratio, there will be more teachers allocated to the system.

These new allocations will be allocated to Boards who will in turn deploy such units to the schools. The Department of Education has indicated to us that it is incumbent upon the districts to allocate classroom teacher units according to the class-size maximums. If after determining the number of units which would be deployed to schools based on the new class size maximums and improved allocation ratios, the District and the school administration determine there still exists a need(s) in your school, then a needs-based profile can be developed for your school to demonstrate that an additional unit(s) is necessary for your school to meet those needs. It is the responsibility of the District to advocate to the Department for these additional units for its schools. (An article on highlights and implications of the Teacher Allocation Report can be found on page 10.)

The NLTA prepared a Summary Report to the independent K-12 Mathematics Curriculum Review in November 2007. In our submission, based on 182 individual and group submissions from teachers, we focused on recommending that the Department of Education review the curriculum outcomes at all levels with the goal of eliminating, modifying, moving or integrating the number of outcomes to make them more manageable for teachers and students. We also strongly suggested that the textbooks and resources correlate with the specific outcomes and that inservicing be introduced prior to the implementation of any new programming and be ongoing and sustainable.

With the recent announcement of a completely new mathematics curriculum for the province, it would appear that our voice was indeed heard. The number of outcomes throughout the K-12 curriculum are to be reduced from over 500 to 218. As a result, there will be more time for teachers to focus on each of the topics and concepts as the content will have also been reduced. All recommendations from the math review were accepted by Government. Consequently, we expect an introductory professional development program designed to introduce the curriculum to all math teachers at the appropriate grade levels prior to the first year of implementation (this spring), followed by ongoing and sustainable professional development. This is the commitment made by Government and we look forward to these positive changes. A phased-in implementation starting with Grades K, 1, 4, and 7 this September is a sensible strategy for students and teachers as math is sequential and progressive in nature.

With collective bargaining we are hopeful that negotiations will begin in earnest as soon as possible. During meetings April 2-5, your Provincial Executive approved a revised opening package that has been presented to the Negotiating Team. Prior to this approval, a meeting was held with Joint Council to review our priorities and general objectives. Teacher leaves, supervision, and salary and allowances are some of the major areas we will be pursuing on your behalf. As soon as opening packages are exchanged at the bargaining table, we will be scheduling a series of branch meetings throughout the province to share the opening proposals with all teachers.

We have had considerable success with the recommendations that Government has committed itself to relative to the ISSP/Pathways report, the new Teacher Allocation model and the new math curriculum. We will be diligent and vigilant in ensuring that these changes are implemented in a timely manner and in ways that will provide the greatest benefit to the teachers and students of this province. Please continue to stay in touch with your Association as these changes come about if you feel we can be of any assistance. Thank you.

Sean

the bulletin

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Funny You Should Ask

Do you have a humorous story, joke or anecdote about your life as a teacher that you would like to share with readers? This could be something that occurred in the classroom, overheard comments from students or teachers, or just a funny incident that happened to you while at school. We would love to print it in *The Bulletin*. If selected to be printed we will send you an NLTA gift package.

All submissions should be in good taste and may be edited for content.

Please forward submissions to:
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PROVINCIAL/NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

NEWS

TORBAY

School to represent NL in 2008 Cape Farewell Youth Expedition

On January 25, the environmental group from Holy Trinity High School in Torbay was selected by the British Council Canada to represent Newfoundland and Labrador in the Cape Farewell Youth Expedition 2008. The group known as FOG (Friends of the Gully) had submitted a 500-word proposal outlining their school and community projects. The students expressed their passion about climate change and made a commitment to promote climate change education at Holy Trinaity High if given the opportunity to participate in the 2008 expedition.

On February 21, three teachers from Holy Trinity High were sent to Montreal for a two-day in-service on the implementation of the Cape Farewell program. The 19 schools were divided into PODS, each consisting of three schools. These schools must continue a liaison to share ideas and activities that relate to climate change education. The teachers from Holy Trinity High were: Maureen Clements (assistant principal), Karen Channing (art teacher) and Dianne Neil (science teacher).

Cape Farewell is a series of voyages to the high Arctic where the crew includes scientists, artists, teachers and students who investigate the impact of global warming on climate change and its implications for the planet. The program began in 2003 and was developed by a British artist and filmmaker, David Buckland. Cape Farewell is sponsored by the British Council, a registered charity from the United Kingdom which operates at arms length from the British government to promote educational opportunities and cultural relations. The objective is to present "Climate Change" as a cultural issue where the combination of art and science is used to move public opinion. The best place to initiate change is with youth. Give youth a voice and an experience so they can return to their school and community with ideas to drive change. The voyager becomes an ambassador to their generation. Cape Farewell gives youth a structure to have a voice, make decisions and make a difference.

The FOG group will take on an identity known as the "Ground Crew" for the Cape Farewell Expedition. The voyager will be chosen from a smaller group of students known as the "Green Team". The Green Team consists of five students who were chosen democratically by their peers to best lead the project, which requires climate change education to be integrated across the curriculum. Members of the Green Team will showcase their talents collectively on a 9-minute video which will be uploaded to the youtube web site on May 19. British Council Canada will select the voyager from their presentations. The members of the Green Team include: Sarah Turner (level 2); Shelaine Wade (level 2); Samantha Wade (level 2); Renee Roach (level 1); and Julia Penny (level 1).

Ground Crew and Green Team for the Cape Farewell Youth Expedition.

The voyager from Holy Trinity High will join students from 19 other schools, 15 of which are across Canada. Other participating schools are from Brazil, Mexico, Germany and Ireland. The students will travel to Toronto on September 1 for four days of training, then fly to Reykjavik, Iceland, to join the crew on a Russian icebreaker. The ship will sail around the southern tip of Greenland and then north to Baffin Island. The students will be developing art and science projects and will be mentored by accomplished scientists and celebrated artists. There will be live communication with the voyager via

web cam and Internet blogs that will include opportunities for two-way communication. The Ground Crew must raise $2,000 to cover transportation costs to Iceland; remaining expenses are covered by the British Council.

The voyager will concentrate their study on one of four themes: oceanography, climatology, biodiversity and geomorphology. The students will return and lead the Green Team, and consequently the Ground Crew, in designing climate change activities that can be adapted to many grade levels and subject areas. As well, the students will plan extra curricular activities relating to climate change education to engage the entire school population and the surrounding community.

"This is a youth driven initiative – one that will be planned and executed by students and ultimately lead to peer teaching and education," says Dianne Neil, Science teacher at Holy Trinity High. "We are in the Pre-Voyage stage. There is much more to come during the actual expedition in September followed by the Post Voyage initiatives. Our goal is to embed the Cape Farewell experience into our school curriculum and our school culture."

For further information visit www.capefarewell-canada.ca and www.capefarewell.com.

BURIN BAY ARM

Special breakfast served during Education Week

The Jamieson Academy Breakfast Program celebrated Education Week by incorporating this year's theme to promote healthy eating. In keeping with the theme "Learn... Respect... Grow", the committee encouraged students to Learn to try new foods, Respect their bodies by eating nutritionally, and Grow healthy and strong. On Wednesday, March 5, a special breakfast of hot porridge and a variety of fruits and yogurts was served to the students and staff.

"The event was a tremendous success, with help from 12 volunteers of the Garnish Lions Club and Mr. Wayne Lockyer, Manager of the Marystown Dominion Store, along with two of his staff, Maureen and Mona," said Ruby Whiffen-Tilley, Chairperson of the Breakfast Program Committee. The Lions Club prepared the usual breakfast menu and the porridge, as that was their regularly scheduled week, while the Dominion staff set up and served an impressive arrangement of various fruits and yogurts.

"Breakfast is served every school morning, with its success depending on our volunteers and local sponsors. On behalf of the students and staff we would like to thank *all* our supporters for *caring*!" concluded Ms. Whiffen-Tilley.

Dominion staff serve fruit and yogurt to students at Jamieson Academy during special Education Week breakfast.

GANDER

Media students win national video competition

Gander Collegiate students Mike Mosher, Zach Healey, Rhea Simms, Laura Gushue and Nida Najifi, along with Gander Collegiate Media Teacher Brian Mosher, have been named National winners in the 2008 "Racism: Stop It" Video Competition, sponsored by the Department of Canadian Heritage.

This competition, now in its twelfth year, asks students to create a television commercial raising awareness on the need to eliminate racism in Canada. The Gander Collegiate entry, "It Only Takes One" was judged by a federal judging panel with more than 500 other entries from across Canada representing more than 2,000 students. In the twelve years that this competition has been in existence, the Gander Collegiate entry represents the very first time that students from Newfoundland and Labrador have actually made the National winners list. This was also Gander Collegiate's first time to have entered this national competition.

The winning entries in this competition aired on CBC as part of the network's anti-racism strategy. This premiered on March 21, 2008, the National Anti Racism Awareness Day in Canada. This video was also translated into French and will air on both the CBC's French and English networks. This was also the only one of the national winning entries to do so this year.

Through this victory, the five students and their teacher were invited to Ottawa for four days, March 15-18, to be part of the National awards ceremony.

(*cont'd.*)

To learn more about this competition or to see the winning videos for 2008, go to www.pch.gc.ca/march-21-mars/contest/index_e.cfm. For further information, contact Brian Mosher at Gander Collegiate, Tel: 709-256-2581, e-mail bmosher@ncsd.ca.

FOXTRAP

Arts world meets technical world

The arts world met the technical world and the high school met the College on the evening of April 10, 2008 at the College of the North Atlantic in Seal Cove. Visual Arts teacher Valerie Tubman of Queen Elizabeth Regional High School in Foxtrap partnered with Librarian Andrea Hyde at the College to display the excellent art of students in the local community. "Andrea wanted a way to promote the college to the community and to brighten the walls of the library at the same time," said Michelle Clemens, Assistant Principal at Queen Elizabeth Regional High.

Ms. Tubman's Art & Design 3220 class began work on bold acrylics, which would stand out against the industrial background of the study rooms. She also wanted to showcase work done by some of the school's graduates. "Hunter Ellis, who graduated in 2002 has a wonderful portrait of an old man, and alumni Jordan Murphy's *Lady in Yellow* was set to canvas in 1995," stated Ms. Clemens.

The Exhibit was launched on April 10 to the sweet sounds of Tifany Pinhorn and Brad Ivany. They were among 10 music students, under the direction of Kathy Joy, who performed for parents, students and special guests of the town and College.

Student Tifany Pinhorn performs at the launch of the art exhibit in April.

Ms. Clemens says the artists were thrilled to see their work professionally hung in a public building. Their work will be on display until the first week in May. The permanent pieces will be returned to Queen Elizabeth and the paintings that were developed for the show will be returned to the students. "A few of the young artists were open to the idea of a sale, so if you are looking for a piece of artwork, why not make them a temping offer," said Ms. Clemens. "The general public is welcome to view the artwork or check out a novel from Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Why not drop by and see what they have to offer?"

ST. JOHN'S

Celebrating Pi Day

Mathematics is sometimes referred to as "the art of numbers" or "the science most often misunderstood." "In my mind, mathematics is both an art and a science," says Jennifer Gibbons, Mathematics teacher at Prince of Wales Collegiate in St. John's. "However, for the majority of students, math is just an illusion. A subject created by the Greeks of long ago who had too much time on their hands."

As a senior high teacher, mathematics is what Ms. Gibbons loves to do. However, she believes it is one of the hardest subjects to teach since students have either an anxiety or a hatred of it long before they walk through her classroom door. "They have made up their minds that never in the real world will they use the law of cosines, the Pythagorean Theorem or be asked to find the equation of a quadratic. Half the challenge in teaching mathematics is convincing students to at least give the subject a try and be willing to accept its importance in their overall education."

This year Prince of Wales Collegiate celebrated its first annual Pi Day on March 14. The mathematical constant, pi, approximated as 3.14, has been celebrated on the 14th day of the third month for over a hundred years. "This year, we felt it was time for the students of Prince of Wales Collegiate to celebrate such an important mathematical constant," commented Ms. Gibbons. The students and teachers of two Mathematics 2205 classes were involved in organizing the event. Financial assistance for the day was granted from the Excellence in Mathematics Strategy from the Department of Education.

There were four aspects in which students were involved. The first was a session for the neighboring elementary school. Grade 5 and 6 students from St. Andrew's Elementary were invited to participate in mathematical games and competitions. They also learned about pi for the first time. Each student received a certificate of participation and various individual and group prizes were awarded.

The second aspect was the "Pi a Teacher – Food Challenge." Students in each homeroom were asked

to bring along a non-perishable food item or monetary donation for the local food bank. With each donation, students had a chance to "Pi" a teacher. The lucky winners "pi'ed their teachers in the gym on Pi Day. Other gym competitions included a scavenger hunt, pie eating contest, digits of pi recitation contest, and a hula hoop competition. This event was well attended by both students and teachers.

Students enjoy the "Pi a Teacher – Food Challenge" during Pi Day celebrations.

The third aspect involved Mathematics 2205 students facilitating activities and competitions involving the number pi in all mathematics classes throughout the day. The goal was for students to learn mathematics and to have fun while doing it!

A fourth aspect of the day was a Pi Day webpage. Two students created a site to display information about the events, pictures of the activities and information about the mathematics of Pi. A link to this page has been created on the Prince of Wales Collegiate website for all students and parents to view.

"Overall, the day was a great success," said Ms. Gibbons. "The students at Prince of Wales Collegiate had the opportunity to engage in a fun aspect of mathematics and learn more about the infamous constant pi. Creating more opportunities such as this will hopefully help to engage students in mathematics and reveal some of the mystery behind the illusion."

Students take part in Spread the Net Challenge

There is a bed net/poster display in the corridor at MacDonald Drive Junior High in St. John's. Why you ask? Joan McCue, School Counsellor at MacDonald Drive Junior High says their aim was to first raise awareness and second, because the Random Acts of Kindness Club took the "Spread the Net" challenge to help raise money for a very worthy cause.

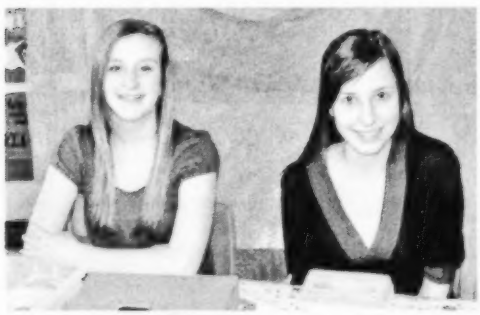
(cont'd.)

The "Spread the Net" campaign was founded by Belinda Stronach and native Newfoundlander, Rick Mercer, following their trip to Africa in 2005. It was there that they first saw the devastating effects of malaria and the shockingly simple solution.

Malaria is a deadly disease spread by mosquitoes. Every 30 seconds, an African child dies of malaria. Malaria is the single biggest killer of African children.

Malaria-carrying mosquitoes usually strike at night. The solution – bed nets and you – sleeping under an insecticide-treated bed net can reduce the transmission of malaria.

The bed nets cost $10.00 each and MacDonald Drive Junior High raised a grand total of $1,000.00. "This fundraiser was a learning experience for both students and staff." said Ms. McCue.



Students at MacDonald Drive Junior High sell bed nets as part of their fundraiser for the "Spread the Net" Challenge.

NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

It's a Blue, Blue Day!

On May 22, 2008, all students in the province are invited to wear something blue. "Blue signifies sadness, the sadness we feel for kids in the third world who want an education and who are not as fortunate as we are," says Bridget Murphy, retired teacher and organizer of It's a Blue, Blue Day! "I will be appealing to the students of this province to help the youth of Chactela, Guatemala by donating a loonie on It's a Blue, Blue Day! I have chosen this date to coincide with Aboriginal Awareness Week in our province. This project will be a tool that provides the youth of Chactela, Guatemala with a chance for a better life through education."

The objective of the project is to raise money to purchase textbooks, school supplies and school furniture for the youth of Chactela, Ixcan, Guatemala.

Since 2006, Bridget Murphy has made three trips to visit and volunteer in the Parroquia Cristo Redentor Mission in Playa Grande, Guatemala. It is one of the poorest regions in Guatemala and one of the poorest in Central America. This area of Guatemala is known for the massacres of entire villages, women and children during the civil war of the 80s.

The mission at Playa Grande serves 120 villages in which many are accessible only by walking up the mountains for sometimes as long as two hours. This area is mainly inhabited by indigenous people, the Maya Q'eqchi, who receive little or no financial support from the government.

During her stay, she was very fortunate to be able to visit many of these villages and to experience firsthand the level of poverty in this area. Many of the people live in poverty with little access to adequate jobs, medical care, good drinking water, electricity, housing and education.

Many of these villages have no schools. The schools that are found in this area of Guatemala have few or no educational resources and are poorly staffed. The schools are substandard having no electricity, no running water and no proper bathroom facilities other than an outhouse. The children have no access to a library, computer room, or to a gym.

In January of this year Ms. Murphy made a visit to an area in Guatemala called Chactela. This area consists of 55 communities and has no high school. Presently, a group of teachers in this area have come together to help secure a building for a high school for the youth of Chactela. Once they have a school, there will be a need to purchase textbooks, basic school supplies and school furniture. This will not be an easy task. Since the families live on a few dollars a day, most of the youth will have difficulty attending.

"By investing in the education of the youth of Chactela, Ixcan in Guatemala , the students of Newfoundland and Labrador are helping to plant the seeds for a stronger future for these youth."

CANADA

What is Insurance? Mini-Lessons teacher resource

Curriculum Connections has introduced *What is Insurance? Mini-Lessons* which is available online for download. This redeveloped resource enables teachers to educate students in grades 9 to 12 to understand more about home, business, and auto insurance. To keep up with today's teaching trends and experiential learning needs, *What is Insurance? Mini-Lessons* have been updated and simplified, yet still focused on introducing the topic of what exactly insurance means to students' lives.

The *What is Insurance? Mini-Lessons* are: Insurance is Risk Management; Insurance is Recovery; Insurance is Loss Prevention; Insurance is Safety; Insurance is Shared Responsibility; and Insurance is Peace of Mind.

Each of the six lessons includes teacher's notes for lesson planning, a student activity sheet and where appropriate, an information sheet. These compact mini-lessons work alone or in tandem, giving teachers flexibility for their needs for between 30 to 60 minutes class time. Learning techniques used include brainstorming, teamwork, presentation, and strategies like learn, pair, and share are utilized throughout *What is Insurance? Mini-Lessons*.

The Insurance Institute of Canada's Curriculum Connections program is aimed at building a better understanding of insurance among junior high and high school students across Canada, to better prepare them for the real world. The program encourages the inclusion of insurance into curricula and builds an understanding of insurance among teachers and students. The Curriculum Connections program is sponsored by the home, business, and auto insurance industry, therefore all educational resources are free of charge to Canadian teachers.

The Insurance Institute of Canada is the not-for-profit professional development association of the home, business, and auto insurance industry in Canada. It is an association of 30,000 individual members employed in insurance and reinsurance companies, brokerages, agencies, adjusting firms, and employers of risk managers. The Institute educates industry professionals and awards Canada's premier professional insurance designation the Chartered Insurance Professional (CIP) and the Fellow Chartered Insurance Professional (FCIP).

Download *What is Insurance? Mini-Lessons* at www.career-connections.info.

Health & Wellness Promotion

The Teacher Health & Wellness pilot project will be starting early in May. Thank you to all schools that have shown an interest in participating in this project.

Remember that your health is your single most valuable asset. By making a conscious effort to improve or maintain a healthy lifestyle you are providing a service to yourself, your family, and your students.

Further information on the Teacher Health & Wellness Program will follow in the upcoming weeks and months. Check The Bulletin and the NLTA website for updates.

If you have any questions about the Teacher Health & Wellness Program please contact:

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The Teacher Allocation Commission Report
Highlights and Implications

In mid-March the Department of Education released the Teacher Allocation Commission's Report entitled *Education and Our Future: A Road Map to Innovation and Excellence*. At that time it also provided to the public its response to the Commission's recommendations. The NLTA immediately began an indepth analysis of the long-awaited report and Government's response, knowing that potentially every school and every teacher would be impacted by it.

While the NLTA cannot unequivocally endorse all the Commission's recommendations and there are concerns with some aspects of Government's response, we can say with confidence that our voice was heard by the Commission as our input is reflected in their report and in many of their recommendations. Of paramount importance is both the Commission's recommendation, and Government's acceptance, of the underlying concept of teacher allocation based on school needs identified at the local level. This is a major shift in thinking which we believe will lead to an improved system of allocation. The model the Department of Education will be implementing is a combination of "numbers-driven" and "needs-driven" principles. The following contains further analysis of the Teacher Allocation Model and will hopefully address any questions you may have. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you need any further information or have any questions.

New Allocation Model

The model the Department is implementing will be a combination of "numbers-driven" and "needs-driven" principles. Central to the new allocation model are class size maximums for both single grade and multi-graded classrooms, a new specialist teacher ratio, a new allocation process for special education, a new allocation ratio for learning resource teachers, and an improved allocation for school administrators. In addition, Districts may avail of a needs-based profile for those schools where the base allocation does not meet the demands of their entire school program. It is a radical change from the historical method of allocating teaching units based only on the pure numbers-driven student-teacher ratio, as there will now exist a needs-based component that may be utilized if the numbers-driven part of the teacher allocation still does not meet the needs of the students and school.

Class Size Maximums

Under the new model, class size maximums will be implemented beginning in September 2008. This part of the allocation will be calculated based on school numbers, reported by grade with the applicable class size maximums applied. Phasing this in over the next three years, by 2010 these class size maximums will be in effect for K-9. As of September 2008, class size maximums will be applied in K-4, and Grade 7.

The class size maximums that are to be introduced over the next three years are:

- Sept. 2008: K – 20; Grades 1-4 – 25; Grade 7 – 27
- Sept. 2009: Grade 5 – 25; Grade 8 – 27
- Sept. 2010: Grades 6 – 25; Grade 9 – 27

Under the new model, improvements in multi-graded maximums will all be implemented for September 2008 and maximum class sizes have been set for multi-graded classes as follows:

Grade Combination	Max. Class Size
K with any one other	15
K with any two others	12
K with any 3 others (e.g. K-3)	10
Any two primary, primary/elementary or elementary/intermediate	15
Three or more primary	14
Three or more primary/elementary or elementary/intermediate	15

While the NLTA had advocated for even smaller class size maximums, and will continue to do so, it recognizes that Government's new maximum class sizes should represent improvements to the old formula. The new class size maximums will result in an additional teaching unit being allocated to the District once the maximum has been exceeded. By introducing

the idea of a class size maximum instead of the former student-teacher ratio, there should be more teachers allocated to the system. For example, under the old formula, if there were 37 students in school "X" in grade 2, the student-teacher ratio would have only given the school 1.48 units, i.e., 37 students divided by a 25 class size cap would equal 1.48. Under the new model with a class size maximum of 25, two teachers would be allocated. The advantage of using the class size maximum is that additional full units will be allocated once the class size maximums are exceeded.

In addition, there will be improved ratios for a number of other units: (i) improvements to administrative allocations; (ii) improvements to specialist teacher allocations from the current 1:250 for Grade 7-Level III to 1:175 for Grade Kindergarten to Level III; (iii) a revised ratio allocation of Special Education teachers at 1:90; and (iv) improvements to Learning Resource Teacher (LRT) allocations from 1:1000 to 1:750.

Needs Analysis

It is in this part of the new model, as part of the allocation phase (Step 1), where we will see the most significant change in the process. It is during the needs analysis where, at the school level, the administration and staff, together with district personnel, assess whether the units available under the numbers-driven class size maximums and other ratio-based allocations can adequately meet the needs of the school. If it is deemed that they can, the process is complete and the only difference in the staffing numbers would be an adjustment based on "emergent" needs, i.e. a circumstance which may arise after the fact. (This could be something such as an influx of a group of students from immigrant families who may require ESL services, or even a single child with exceptional needs requiring additional support services entering the school.) If, however, the school and the District deem that the number of units available for the school under the numbers-driven part of the model cannot adequately address the needs of the students, the administration and staff, working with District personnel, will then be expected to develop a proposal for additional personnel specific to the needs they identify. These proposals will form the School District Report and be taken by senior District officials to the Department. Any additional staff allocated in this manner by the Department during this process must then be used at that school and the teacher(s) must be assigned to meet those specified needs.

This needs-based approach is a significant part of the new model, and definitely a step in the right direction. It appears complex because it is complex. As the process unfolds, we can predict some of the issues; we are certain that there are scenarios which will arise that we cannot possibly foretell. No doubt the implementation phase will present some need for collaboration and problem solving.

It must also be taken into consideration that, for this year, the full process under the new model was condensed into a very narrow time period since the release of the Report. This was necessary in order to meet timelines for teacher staffing for 2008-09, including specific provisions of the collective agreements. For future years, as recommended by the Commission, the complete process would occur after the completion of the annual general return in early Fall and before mid-December. This would allow for completion of the process which would then determine the full allocation for the subsequent school year.

To address the concerns that were expressed by the Commission regarding very small schools, the Department has agreed under its new allocation model to implement a "needs-driven/school-developed" allocation process, which will be based strictly on School and District planning initiatives for schools with enrollments of 25 or less, or K-12 schools with enrolments of 42 or less. There will also be the creation of new Instructional Education Officer positions within the Districts for the purpose of "supporting student achievement, school leadership, and school development."

Other recommendations that were provisionally accepted by the Department, pending further review, include: (i) increases in the allocations ratio for guidance counsellors; (ii) class size maximums as they apply to English, French Immersion, and Intensive Core French; (iii) increase in the allocation ratio for English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers; (iv) recognition of the unmanageable caseloads of Speech-Language Pathologists; (v) increase in the allocations of Program Specialists units to School Districts; and (vi) initiatives to address recruitment and retention issues in isolated areas.

While we recognize that this new allocation model is indeed a substantial step in the right direction, the Association has reaffirmed our position on even lower class size maximums, applied throughout the system, K-Level III. We are also advocating for involvement on any committees or working groups which may be formed to study those recommendations which have been provisionally accepted. Furthermore, we will be closely monitoring this first critical implementation. It is our view that when everything is considered, this new approach should lead to improvements in the system, i.e., more teachers and lower class sizes that will strengthen the classroom learning environment for our students.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. The end of another school year will soon be upon us. At that time of year the following question often arises: Can teachers collect Employment Insurance (EI) benefits during the summer holidays?

A. The Employment Insurance Regulations state that, in general, teachers are not eligible to receive EI benefits during the "non-teaching periods" (Christmas, Easter break, July and August) unless they fall within one of three exceptions, which are:

1. if the teacher's contract of employment for teaching has terminated;
2. if the teacher was working on a casual or substitute basis; or
3. if the teacher qualifies for EI benefits on the basis of employment in an occupation other than teaching.

Since they have no termination of contract, teachers in permanent positions are not eligible to collect regular EI benefits when school is not in session (unless they have sufficient insurable hours from employment other than teaching). Substitute teachers would generally qualify under the second exception.

Replacement or term contract teachers may be eligible for EI during the summer in certain circumstances. This issue has been the subject of many EI appeals over the years and was ultimately brought to the Federal Court of Appeal by the NLTA in a case that was heard in June of 2002. The case in question involved a teacher who had been hired in a replacement position for the 1998-99 school year. Just before the last day of school, the teacher accepted another full-year term contract for 1999-2000. The teacher applied for, but was denied EI benefits for July and August of 1999. His appeal to the Board of Referees was successful but the EI Commission appealed to the Umpire and the decision was reversed. The Federal Court of Appeal upheld the Umpire's decision. This issue is not unique to Newfoundland and Labrador and a number of similar cases from Alberta resulted in a similar decision from the Federal Court of Appeal.

The Federal Court of Appeal decisions are legal precedents and the application of these decisions has had the following impact: teachers who finish a term contract at the end of a school year may be eligible for EI regular benefits during the summer, but their entitlement ends as soon as they accept a position (term or permanent) for the following school year. For example, a teacher who has a term contract for the 2007-08 school year applies for EI benefits at the end of June. On August 1, she is offered and accepts another term contract for the 2008-09 school year. This teacher would therefore only be eligible for EI benefits for the month of July as she would be disqualified as of the date of acceptance of the new contract. It is the teacher's responsibility to advise the EI Commission once she has a new contract – failure to do so may result in an overpayment of benefits for which the Commission can seek reimbursement.

Of course, like other employees, teachers must meet the normal eligibility requirements in order to receive regular EI benefits: they must have the necessary insurable hours of employment and must be available for work. Teachers in receipt of regular EI benefits must be able to demonstrate that they are ready, willing and able to work and are conducting an active job search. Those who restrict their job search to teaching positions only during the summer, when such work is not available, may be disqualified and/or have to repay benefits received.

In addition to regular EI benefits (those available to someone who is unemployed), there are also four categories of special benefits: sickness, compassionate care, maternity and parental. There are separate eligibility requirements for special benefits and teachers would not normally be eligible for sickness or compassionate care benefits during the non-teaching periods. However, teachers may be able to claim maternity and/or parental benefits during the summer months, as well as the Christmas and Easter breaks.

This information has been prepared by Stefanie Tuff and is general in nature. If you have a specific inquiry regarding your own EI claim or if you are considering filing an appeal to the Board of Referees or Umpire, please contact any of the following at 726-3223 or toll-free at 1-800-563-3599: Lloyd Hobbs, ext. 230, Don Ash, ext. 231, Perry Downey, ext. 226 or Stefanie Tuff, ext. 232.

From the Horizon

by ALEX HICKEY

Someone, whose name I don't know, once wrote, "You never really leave a place or person you love; part of them you take with you, leaving a part of yourself behind." Such is the case with most teachers as they bring closure to their careers. I once had an elderly neighbour who taught for fifty-two years and touched the lives of generations; most of those years in the same one-room school. He left me many moments of inspiration.

Now, as I move on to other challenges and opportunities in the private sector, I savour and treasure all of those things I take with me that I have been so generously given throughout my career. One of these was the opportunity to have taught for eight years in a one-room school in my hometown at the beginning of my career; to have had the incredible luck to have lived an experience that has now passed from our system. Another was to return to university at age thirty and study to become an artist and art teacher which opened doors I didn't even know existed at the time. During my years at a district office and at the Department of Education I lived on the ground floor of change and educational maturation in our province.

The office I now leave sits on the edge of tomorrow; on the rising wave of rich technological support for teachers, things I dreamed of as a young teacher; things which I hope, young teachers today take as normal. My tenure at the Virtual Teacher Centre placed me somewhere I like to call the horizon of invisibility where you get to see and experience innovations long before they become mainstream; long before they are adopted and implemented in the classroom. What an incredible place to be at the end of thirty-five years in education!

In approaching this event I've reflected more frequently on what it means to be a teacher. I must confess that I've never been able to narrow the definition down to a single thought. Every teacher, every classroom, every student, every subject causes the definition to change. Maybe that's just it – the best teachers defy definition; and I've worked alongside many of you, as colleagues, in meetings, at workshops and online. You know who you are.

Among the thousands of people whom I've worked beside none deserve my gratitude any more than the non-teaching staffs, the quiet force in schools and offices that ensures the system works; the dedicated, creative individuals on whom we all rely and trust. Among you I count some of my best friends.

So, is this good-bye? Definitely not; it's my opportunity to say thank you to all I have worked with over the years. I trust that I've left a tiny bit of me in my wake because I take a whole lot of you into my future.

Alex Hickey is Coordinator of the NLTA Virtual Teacher Centre. He is resigning from his position on May 31, 2008.

Can You Hear Me?

by MARIE WALL

Hearing health is often ignored. I believe because of agism and perception, many of us are willing to do to our ears what we would never do to our eyes – ignore our hearing health. It is unlikely that a person would wait five or six years to see an optometrist when they noticed their eyesight failing but I know several people, including myself, who let their hearing go for that long before receiving medical attention from an audiologist. At least two of the reasons for this illogical behaviour are a lack of awareness, denial that there is a hearing loss, or the belief that being hard of hearing is not so bad.

Hearing loss can be present at birth (congenital) or become evident later in life (acquired deafness), either may be inherited or due to ear damage. The purpose of this article is to promote awareness for adult onset hearing loss and steps to be taken if you or someone you know may need hearing care.

First, increasing your awareness and then taking steps to remedy the impact on your life is possible. If you have hearing loss, there is help. Both mechanical aids and surgical operations are available to improve your quality of life. Several members of my family have a congenital hearing loss, otosclerosis, and we have been dealing with the effects of deafness for 40 years. My first encounter with my own hearing loss occurred about 10 years ago. This was a very emotional experience and, foolishly, I opted to not act. Several years later I realized the impact this was having on my personal relationships and my work – both were suffering. I have been using a hearing aid now for about five years. One of my sisters opted to have the operation around the same time; for both of us, the positive effect is significant.

Jean-Pierre Gagné, a professor of audiology at the University of Montreal, says, "hearing loss can hurt people in more ways than one. Often it may lead people to choose not to interact with other people because it is so demanding, it is so effortful. So people tend to isolate themselves and stop doing activities where they will meet other people and this has some very negative impacts because it may lead to isolation and even depression." The consequence of hearing loss can affect professional performance, social interaction and emotional health.

I have worked with teachers who were coping with high levels of stress in the classroom. In assessing the contributing factors for the stress and the need for sick leave, hearing loss can be a significant contributor to the ineffective coping ability at work. According to the Canadian Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists, classroom chatter, the din of computers, the hum of lights and outside distractions make classrooms noisy places, and when a teacher has hearing loss this noise can increase the level of stress due to difficulty of hearing and understanding. Research in low-level noise and stress indicate there is a subtle and negative effect on health and well-being. According to Dr. Alice H. Suter, an audiologist at the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, noise-related problems "include high blood pressure, peptic ulcers, cardiovascular deaths, strokes, suicides, degradation of the immune system, and impairment of learning." These are indicators of stress.

The social and emotional impact of hearing loss is very real. Teachers have told me they have stopped going to the staff room because the competing conversations make it too difficult to communicate. This can lead to isolation, misunderstandings, frustration and high levels of stress. The inability to engage with others, whether professional or social, affects one's emotional health also. People who do not pick up on jokes or who mishear a phrase and make statements that are incorrect can feel embarrassed. Over a long time this can cause a drop in self-esteem and confidence.

The causes of adult onset deafness vary widely. There could be hearing loss from damage, aging or a genetic disposition to the deafness that does not manifest itself until adulthood. Whatever the underlying reason, the symptoms of hearing loss can be both physical and environmental.

Symptoms

- hearing but not understanding
- turning up the TV volume
- attempting to lip read for understanding
- feeling disoriented to sound direction
- speaking louder than others around you in an attempt to hear yourself

- tinnitus, which may be a compensation for not hearing sound
- social withdrawal
- fatigue

Indicators

- asking "what" or "huh" often
- others complain the TV is too loud
- focus on a person's mouth and not the person
- hearing your name but not the direction it is coming from
- others complain you are speaking too loudly
- ringing noise in the ear
- too difficult to hold a conversation in a crowd, such as the staff room, so it is easier not to go
- tired after a period of active listening

A person may not notice they have the volume much louder than normal or that their exhaustion is due to working so hard to hear. Taking time to think about whether you are getting such feedback is a step towards better hearing health.

If you do have a hearing loss there are several things you can do to help yourself and in turn help the people around you. It is important to have an examination and hearing test by an audiologist. You can then investigate whether a hearing aid or surgery is best suited for you and make your best decision for hearing health. Developing skills and communicating your needs to others is also essential.

Communication is a key to better hearing. Let people know you are hard of hearing and give them a few tips on how to better communicate with you.

- When you are speaking with someone and having some difficulty, ask him or her to speak more clearly; it improves quality of hearing.
- When you are being addressed, ask others to be in the same room and in your line of vision before they begin speaking to you. You should also ask others to state your name first to ensure they have your attention. These go a long way in not having to ask them to repeat themselves or getting upset with you for not following what they are saying to you.
- If you are presenting to a large group, let the people know you are hard of hearing and need them to speak one at a time. I have found this very important in shoring up my confidence when facilitating group sessions.
- When attending a meeting sit near the front of the group so you do not pick up extraneous noise.
- If others are speaking too loudly or the speed is too fast or too slow, let them know a normal tone is better for understanding them.

While this article has been written from my experience and through research. I would like to thank Dr. Valerie Parrott who runs a clinic in St. John's, treating patients throughout the province. I consulted with Dr. Parrott to ensure the information contained in this article is reflective of the experience of many of her patients.

May is Speech and Hearing Awareness Month. There is no better time to think about your hearing and if there are supports that can assist you in improving your professional, social and emotional health and well-being.

Marie Wall is an EAP Coordinator with the Employee Assistance Program for teachers. For confidential assistance contact Marie Wall (ext. 265) or Claudette Coombs (ext. 242).

New Normal – The Boiling Point?

by BEVERLEY PARK

You are no doubt aware of the concept of "new normal," when some part of your reality is altered and you have to adapt to new circumstances. On a personal level, the new normal comes about as a result of some life-changing event such as the birth of a child or the loss of someone close. The new normal causes us to see the world differently, and it impacts on every decision we make – little things like the items on our grocery list, big things like a change of address. New normal can bring with it great sorrow, great gladness or great turmoil, but it always means change and a difference in our surroundings that forces a change in us as well. While I have always been amazed at human resilience, my observances of teachers is that they have to be some of the most adaptable of all humans.

To the public, schools appear to be places of great tradition. They are viewed as stable, unchanging environments. Ask your neighbour or your mechanic. Guaranteed he or she will think they have a pretty good idea of what happens in schools because they were once students. Never mind the fact that it may have been 20 or 30 years ago. In reality, schools are places of constant change, and chances are the description of your neighbour or your mechanic would not reflect the reality lived by those who attend school – students or teachers. The Board re-structures, a new normal. The administration changes, a new normal. A class graduates or moves out to the next level, a new normal. A bully moves in, a new normal. These things may go unnoticed by those outside the school and are invisible to parents or the public at large. However, viewed from inside the school, these are blatant changes requiring multi-leveled responses. Teachers have to reinvent themselves on a regular basis!

To illustrate the need to adapt to change, I am going to borrow from Senge's "Fifth Discipline" in which he uses the example of how frogs may (or not) adapt to changes in the environment. First, let's look at change which happens in a flash, unplanned and unexpected. It requires quick and immediate response. Illustration: If you took a frog and dropped it in a pot of boiling water it will flail and flounder to save itself and get out of the pot any way it can. It may bear the scars of the incident but, in the end, survives. Alternatively, let's examine change which is slow and incremental requiring gradual adaptation. Illustration: The same frog, which before reacted spontaneously, is now in a vat of water with a normal body temperature and will not react when the heat is slowly and gradually increased. The temperature eventually reaches a point where, tragically, the frog actually boils – a victim of its inability to recognize change and the need to respond. Senge refers to this as the boiled frog syndrome.

As I said, I believe that teachers, thankfully, are very adept at responding to changes – both the urgent and the emergent. Though there are without a doubt a few who are bearing the scars of some of the instant shocks we have had to deal with in the school environment, most are adapted to the many incremental and gradual changes we have had to live with over recent years and months. Unless we sit back and think deeply, we have done so without conscious effort. Think for a moment of all the changes that have happened in the system as a result of restructuring; declining enrolments in rural areas with outmigration and the influx of students into the urban centres; of the changes that have come with the widespread use of technology: e-reporting, homework hotlines, web pages as a window into classrooms and schools, email which has made communication possible 24-7, and students who are so tech-savvy that they can take bullying to a whole new level.

It is a tribute to teachers that they are able to quickly and invisibly adapt to the new normals they face. It preserves a sense of continuity for students who otherwise might experience the educational environment as chaotic and random. It protects against public anxiety and allows for confidence in the system. And while adaptability is a wonderful attribute, I cannot help but wonder if, in "making it work" there are a few too many boiled frogs in our staff rooms.

Beverley Park is Senior Administrative Officer in the Professional Development Division of the NLTA.

"Teaching With the Brain in Mind"

A Two-Day Workshop by Eric Jensen

Delta Conference Centre, St. John's

November 6-7, 2008

The Council of Special Services (COSS) is partnering with the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association Modern Languages Council, the Primary/Elementary, Intermediate and Senior High Levels Councils to bring internationally renowned 'brain-based learning' guru and educator Eric Jensen to St. John's on November 6 and 7, 2008.

Mr. Jensen will be presenting a two-day workshop at the Delta Conference Centre entitled, "Teaching with the Brain in Mind". This professional development session has universal appeal. Educators in Newfoundland and Labrador will have an opportunity to work with Eric Jensen during his first ever visit to our province. Given that Mr. Jensen will be presenting locally, participants will avail of his expertise and experience at a fraction of the cost of attending a similar workshop outside the province.

The NLTA Special Interest Councils who are sponsoring the Jensen workshop are committed to making the session financially accessible to as many interested educators as possible. The Delta Conference Centre has a capacity for some 1,000 delegates so hopefully everyone who wishes to attend can be accommodated.

Further details re the cost of the two-day workshop and registration details will be made available in the near future. In the interim, be sure to book November 6 and 7, 2008 in your calendar. **The Jensen two-day workshop is one professional development session that you will not want to miss!**

Eric Jensen writes of the "Teaching with the Brain in Mind" workshop session:

This overview course provides specific, practical connections and useful achievement-boosting strategies for educators at each level: primary, intermediate and high school. All teachers influence their students. Now you can discover what it takes for students to acquire complex learning and achieve their best. You'll want to learn these essential "learning rules" for how our brain works. These are the most critical seven factors that influence learning the most. Discover how children with special needs can be helped. Find out whether music is good for the brains of your students or not. If it is, when and how and what type should be used? Learn additional strategies to boost student engagement. All strategies will be tied to research and role-modeled when possible. This will be an amazing learning experience you'll remember and implement. Get ready for a great blend of learning and fun!

Academic Background

Eric Jensen completed a Bachelor's degree in English at San Diego State University. He is currently completing his PhD. in Media Psychology from Fielding Graduate University.

Experience in Teaching

Eric Jensen has classroom experience teaching reading and study skills. Most of his experience is at the middle school level, but he has also taught demonstration classes at the elementary and senior high school level. Additionally, he has taught for three universities as an adjunct professor in both education and business.

If you have any questions regarding the Jensen workshop, contact:

George Tucker, Administrative Officer / Professional Development
Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association
3 Kenmount Road, St. John's, NL, A1B 1W1
Tel: (709) 726-3223 or 1-800-563-3599, ext. 245; E-mail: gtucker@nlta.nl.ca

For additional information re Eric Jensen, go to www.brainexpo.com.

Teachers Institute on Canadian Parliamentary Democracy

Experience An Insider's Point of View

by CATHERINE PHILLIPS

In November 2007 I had the honour of participating in the 11th Teachers Institute on Canadian Parliamentary Democracy along with three other colleagues from Newfoundland and Labrador.

This Institute was a six-day intensive learning experience that left me in awe, not only of its organization and co-ordination, but also of its value and importance.

If you think that this is a professional development session for high school teachers who are studying politics and Parliament indepth, you are mistaken. This Institute is applicable to teachers from Kindergarten to Level III. The focus is not only on how Parliament works, but also on citizenship and the concept of a democracy and living in a democracy.

While we did receive comprehensive presentations from political, procedural and pedagogical experts, after each session we met in our small groups to discuss how we could use the knowledge gained in our particular grade levels.

The Teachers Institute on Canadian Parliamentary Democracy enabled me to gain a greater understanding of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and insight into our system of government which is the envy of many countries around the world. It presented me with the opportunity to share creative teaching suggestions and also to establish contacts with colleagues from across Canada.

View of the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa.

And what interesting and diverse people they were! We were touched by a Native blessing offered by a teacher from Alberta. We met a teacher who was travelling to Mwinga, Kenya for the opening of a school his students had been instrumental in building through their fundraising efforts. We met teachers from isolated communities in Nunavut to the metropolis of Toronto. We were able to see that Canadians from coast to coast to coast are the same sort of people. Our differences are what make us a nation based on respect, tolerance and peace. The people we met that week, both the organizers and the participants, represented what is best about being a teacher in Canada.

The week we spent in Ottawa was rigorous. Breakfast was at 7:30 a.m. and the sessions generally continued until 5:00 p.m. Most evenings were also planned with delicious meals served in historical settings. For example, the opening dinner was served in the same room where the hearings on the Canadian Charter of Rights are Freedoms took place 25 years ago and the closing dinner was held in the Parliamentary Restaurant. Never in my professional career have I been treated with such respect and felt that my contribution to the educational system was more appreciated.

Everyday there was something to look forward to. But I think most participants would have to agree that seeing the Dali Lama was probably the highlight of the trip. But other wonderful activities were planned for us daily that included:

- a tour of Rideau Hall;
- a tour of the Parliament Buildings;
- meeting the Speaker of the House of Commons;
- meeting the Speaker of the Senate and touring her 'quarters';
- viewing a 'scrum';
- observing Question Period and being in the visitor's gallery for a vote;
- attending the National Forum on Canadian History where Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, Governor General, was the keynote speaker.

While we were being bombarded with presentations, we were also given a wealth of useful print

resources. The Resource Fair, again organized by the hard working staff at the Library of Parliament, gave teachers the opportunity to visit booths from many government organizations to preview their many publications. I was given bags, brochures, booklets, maps, tattoos, posters, books, DVDs … My biggest concern was, how was I ever going to get all this wonderful information back to my classroom! The Library of Parliament provided us with boxes and shipped it all to our respective schools. I received my two boxes within a few days of returning to my classroom.

While there was little time for relaxation, we did manage to squeeze in a Senators hockey game or a visit to the National Art Gallery and of course a few hours of shopping. The tour that left a lasting impression on me was the visit to the Canadian War Museum. This museum chronicles the many wars that Canadians have been involved in. The contributions of Newfoundlanders is well documented, especially Beaumont Hamel. But the most powerful exhibition by far was Afghanistan: A Glimpse of War. This exhibit provided a glimpse of the struggles that Canadians endure as they help to rebuild this country after the turmoil and destruction of war.

If you still have doubts about the relevancy of this institute to your particular grade level, consider the vision of the Foundation document for the Atlantic Provinces Social Studies Curriculum.

"The vision for the Atlantic Canada social studies curriculum is to enable and encourage students to examine issues, respond critically and creatively, and make informed decisions as individuals and as citizens of Canada and of an increasingly interdependent world." (Foundation for the Atlantic Provinces Social Studies Curriculum, Social Studies, page v.)

What better way to help prepare your students than to improve your knowledge by experiencing first hand the intricacies of Parliament and the legislative process, by meeting some of the key players and becoming familiar with their functions and by participating in activities in a stimulating environment?

If you are looking for a professional development session that will revitalize you while learning about Canadian Democracy and Citizenship, apply to attend the Canadian Teachers Institute on Parliamentary Democracy. It is by far the best professional development opportunity I have experienced. You won't be disappointed.

Catherine Phillips is a Grade 6 Intensive French Teacher at Virginia Park Elementary in St. John's.

Cultural Proficiency

Developing the "Tools for Tolerance" in Los Angeles

by KEITH SAMUELSON

Los Angeles. Lala land. Tinseltown. The city of lost angels. The boulevard of broken dreams. On the surface, an unlikely setting for the most profound educational program on the planet.

The city spreads out like a massive blanket of flickering lights along the edge of the Pacific. Visitors are greeted by a huge spider-shaped fluorescent spaceship perched atop a cyclical skyscraper. Simply comprehending the architecture of L.A.X., Los Angeles International Airport, requires a paradigmatic shift in one's thinking.

Across town in Beverly Hills, the world famous Simon Wiesenthal Center offers specific programs to further refine this skill. The Center's multifaceted mission is to generate change by confronting racism, hatred and terrorism, promoting human rights and dignity, and teaching the lessons of the Holocaust for future generations. With a constituency of over 400,000 households in the United States, it is an accredited NGO at international organizations including the United Nations, UNESCO, and the Council of Europe. Headquartered in Los Angeles, the Simon Wiesenthal Center maintains offices in Toronto, New York, Palm Beach, Paris, Buenos Aires and Jerusalem.

Brian Vardy, Gary Noel, Keith Samuelson and David Dibbon at the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles.

I visited the L.A. Center as a guest of the Canadian Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies (FSWC). Two of my colleagues from Prince of Wales Collegiate, Brian Vardy and Gary Noel, and Dr. David Dibbon, Associate Dean of the Faculty of Education at Memorial University, were also our province's first participants in their Tools for Tolerance Program. Our training group included a total of forty teachers, administrators, superintendents and professors from southern Ontario and Nova Scotia as well. Together we shared about 800 years of professional experience.

The Canadian Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center works to improve Canadian society by supporting projects which promote tolerance, justice and human rights. Canadian educators and law enforcement personnel have been offered the opportunity to attend tailor-made workshops in the U.S. since May 2006.

Tools for Tolerance is a leading provider of transformational learning and leadership development. Set in state-of-the-art training facilities, programs connect personal, local and global issues, challenging participants to redefine professional roles in an increasingly complex and changing world. The programs are designed to be experiential and learner-centered, combining expert speakers, innovative learning technologies, interactive workshops and cutting-edge curricula.

In the opening session, Liebe Geft, an elegant lady from Zimbabwe and Director of the Museum of Tolerance, spoke eloquently about the unparalleled challenge of teaching tolerance in an age of extremism. She said that the Museum, which opened in 1993 after the L.A. riots, is not an oasis of calm, but a crucible for change, a place where we confront ourselves in order to create a better world, and thus an enduring memorial to the Holocaust. She also cautioned, "If anyone wants to know what the future holds, just ask a teacher".

The Museum is, in a word, provocative. At the entrance to the permanent exhibit, visitors are asked to enter one of two doors. The first one is marked "Prejudiced", the second "Not Prejudiced". Those who choose the second door discover that it is locked. We are all prejudiced.

Utilizing the high-tech power of words and images, the permanent exhibit challenged us to confront the lessons of history, explore the dynamics of power, and take personal responsibility for the future. Expert guides took us on virtual tours through the streets of wartime Berlin, the killing fields of Europe, and the sites of recent terrorist bombings in Asia and Africa. Participants had fascinating high-tech interactions with artists, athletes and musicians. Comedian Billy Crystal cracked rapid-fire one-liners about growing up in New York. Poet Maya Angelou magically appeared before us in her grandmother's general store and shared personal memories of her childhood. The legendary Carlos Santana performed a soulful ballad and spoke about the everyday life of Mexican Americans in the '60s while we lounged around his bedroom surrounded by a variety of guitars. Perhaps most moving of all were the wide array of historical artifacts on display. We were struck by the sweet handwriting of Anne Frank in her original diary and the touching letters written by her sister Margot so many years ago.

Across the street at the conference center, Dr. Randall Lindsey, a world-renowned expert on educational reform and author of *The Culturally Proficient School*, presented us with *An Implementation Guide for School Leaders*. His workshop was quite intense, highly interactive, and deeply personal. His session was probably the most thought provoking any of us had ever experienced. Dr. Lindsey was passionate about "providing the climate in which learning thrives" and urged us to "identify not just what you're against, but what you're for". He was meticulous in delivering detailed "Strategies for Serving Our Students and Community".

The purposes of the workshop were clearly defined: to describe the impact and influence of race, culture, sexual orientation, socio-economics and class on educational practice; and to present the Cultural Proficiency tools as leadership values and behaviors.

Dr. Lindsey explained that Cultural Proficiency is a process, not a place, and requires an inside-out approach. It is about being aware of how we work with others and how we react to those who are different from us. It involves looking at ourselves, our reactions, policies and practices as well as the values and behaviors of the leader that enable effective cross cultural interactions among students, teachers, administrators and the community. Above all, it is a framework for our practices, not additional work.

Dr. Lindsey taught us a great deal about the moral imperative of education. We learned many strategies for making a positive difference in the lives of students, for teaching individuals how to function effectively in a diverse society, and for doing what has to be done in order to make democracy possible.

Our motivation to utilize these strategies was further enhanced by a heart-wrenching presentation with a speaker from GLIDE (Gays and Lesbians Initiating Dialogue for Equality). Their mission is to eliminate homophobia in their community by providing the general public with factual information and diverse personal experiences about homosexuality. They hope to accomplish this through live, interactive presentations with educational, business, social, political and religious organizations representing every ethnic and cultural group in southern California. Our presenter enlightened us on many stereotypical myths about homosexuality, cited scientific studies which conclude that there is a biological component in sexual orientation, and pointed out that lesbians and gay men do not want special consideration, they simply want equal rights. His stories about the daily verbal harassment of homosexuals, random acts of violence perpetrated against them, the frequency of hate crimes committed against them and their disproportionate rate of suicide were both instructive and shocking. The presenter's courage, commitment and compassion was a tribute to the human spirit. By the end of his session we were much more educated. Most importantly, we were more empathetic.

During a visit to Beverly Hills High School, we strolled into an English class in which students were engaged in a lively debate about the themes of Antigone. Brian Vardy looked at them sternly and demanded in a loud voice "The individual or the state?" About thirty young arms stretched out as the students shouted enthusiastically "The individual!" Dr. Lindsey and the gentleman from GLIDE would have been proud.

Upon reflection, the intense training seems like an emotional blur, a rapid transformation somewhat akin to the view from the window of a jet zooming out of L.A.X. When theory and practice merge, one comes to understand the significance of Lisa Delpit's observation: "We do not really see through our eyes or hear through our ears, but through our beliefs".

Keith Samuelson teaches at Prince of Wales Collegiate in St. John's. Teachers who are interested in participating in the "Tools for Tolerance" Program in Los Angeles or other professional development programs at FSWC's Leadership Training Center in Toronto should contact Janice Kendal, jkendal@fswc.ca.

My Encounter with Young Canadians

by MARY VAN THIEL

Encounters with Canada, launched in 1982, is a one-week program of Canadian studies held at The Terry Fox Canadian Youth Centre in Ottawa. From mid September to early December and from late January to early May, more than 138 high school students per week, aged 14 to 17, come from across the country to our Nation's Capital for a once in a lifetime opportunity. The objective is to bring young Canadians of different backgrounds and regions together in order to give them an opportunity to learn about one another, to discover their country through one another, and to gain a better understanding of Canadian Institutions. Analyzing, discussing and debating why something or someone did what they did is more effective than lecturing. Students were given the opportunity to debate issues in our society.

Every week a team of six program monitors facilitate daily activities which have been developed by the Encounters with Canada professional staff. Program monitors are educators on loan from school boards across the country. I was fortunate to be able to attend a two-week session from January to February 2008. The two weeks were fast paced. Personally, I found my two weeks as a program monitor exhilarating and I am grateful to have had the opportunity to participate. It was a great way to become professionally refreshed and re-energized in the middle of the school year. I was fortunate to work with teachers from Alberta, Saskatchewan, British Columbia, Quebec and the Yukon. I was the only representative from Newfoundland and Labrador the first week. The second we had three NL student participants from Burin, Grand Falls and St. John's, one being a former student from my school, MacDonald Drive Junior High. These students were a great representation of our NL student population.

The program week is divided into two parts. The first part of the week focuses on Canadian institutions and includes visits to Parliament Hill, to the House of Commons and the Senate, and a guided tour of the National Capital Region. Senator Jim Munson spoke of his role with the Special Olympics and Autism. He felt that he could bring about change with families who have autistic children by speaking out and demanding from the Federal Government a National Autism Program. He told the students that being Canadian is important as Canadians are recognized all over the world. "You can go anywhere!"

As a part of the core programming for each week, four modules were offered that cover the following topics: official languages, multiculturalism, remembrance and youth engagement. Major Wayne MacCulloch, a veteran, organizes the Remembrance module which explores the concept of peace and conflict. The remembrance theme is filled with reverence as students stand in the brisk snow in silence as the sound of either a trumpet or violin fill the air.

Teacher/monitor Mary van Thiel with students Rebecca Stuckley, Adrienne Grant, and Christina Rose.

Each week students had the opportunity to choose from a selection of activities in the evening such as trampoline, African Dance, yoga, swimming, gym, cardio and weights, sliding, Haunted Walk of Ottawa, Théatre de l'Île, and a national hockey game. All participants partook in the Canadian Museum of Civilization and IMAX.

The Honourable Laurier LaPierre talked to all students concerning youth involvement in politics.

Monsieur LaPierre is passionate about Canada. He told the students that it is important to understand that we have our feet in this amazing country. Together we form a commitment to accept others for what they are. We have to demonstrate to the world that we are made up of over 1,000 ethnic groups. Canada has turned its eyes and imagination to assist those who are poor and abused. He spoke of the students as a "magnificent generation". They have the opportunity to reach out to many parts of the planet. He states, "Comparisons are for idiots! Be yourself! Be great! We can live in peace. Accept who you are and be proud of it."

The second part of the week was organized around one of our 12 sub-themes. For my first week the sub-theme was Medicine and Health. Participants had the chance to interact with the Ottawa medical community. In order to provide an informative and interesting week dedicated to Medicine and Health, there were three main types of activities: visits, presentations and discussions. My group had the opportunity to visit the Canada Agriculture Museum. Here we were informed of their Genetics and Selective Breeding Workshop and discovered the important role that genetics and selective breeding play in the dairy industry farming as well as some of the industries involved in dairy farming. Other students went to Canadian Blood Services, Algonquin College: Department of Health and Science and La Cité collégiale. Presentations at the Terry Fox Youth Centre centered around medicine and health and included speeches by a paramedic, a medical care person in the armed forces and health research people.

My second week's sub-theme was Arts and Culture. We completed a series of workshops that brought a dozen or more professional artists to the Centre. It provided the perfect opportunity for young people to meet and work with established artists in the fields of singing, clay sculpture, break dancing, watercolor, improvisation, etc. Through the generosity of these artists, the participants took part in several workshops. Visits to galleries, theatres and other cultural institutions were also an important part of the week. The participants were given an opportunity to experience one of the world's greatest collections of art at the National Gallery of Canada.

The second week saw all students invited to the First World War Tribute at Winterlude by Veterans Affairs Canada with the Honorable Greg Thompson, Minister of Veterans Affairs. We all enjoyed the ice sculptures and the outside reception with the veterans. Hot chocolate and a beaver tail made the evening!

I would recommend this experience for all teachers to take part as a monitor for a week or two. Contact www.encounters-rencontres.ca/ for more information. This event has left a lasting impression on me and has given me a better appreciation of this new generation of young Canadians. "Footprints on the Heart" states:

Some people come into our lives and quickly go.
They leave footprints on our hearts.
And we are never, ever the same.
Throughout our lives we are sent precious souls...
meant to share our journey
however brief or lasting their stay
they remind us why we are here.

This new generation left a footprint on my heart and has helped me appreciate my country even more.

Mary van Thiel is a teacher at MacDonald Drive Junior High in St. John's.

Students Raise Awareness for the Beothuk People

by ANNE WARR

On July 26, 2007 Demasduit was recognized as a person of national historical significance by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, and my Grade 2 students at Woodland Primary in Grand Falls-Windsor were there to witness this historical event.

Demasduit (1796-1820) was one of the last known Beothuk Indians. My students were invited to take part in the ceremony commemorating Demasduit which was held at the Botwood Heritage Centre because of their efforts throughout the year to try to right the wrongs that were done to one of Newfoundland's first people, the Beothuks.

At the ceremony, Grade 2 students Mark Roberts and ShyAnna Mercer read acrostic poems they had composed about the Beothuks. Students Denika Lewis and Joanie Pinsent also took turns reading the book, *The Mammoth Bakeapple*. This book is an add-on story that the entire class created in Language Arts class with the help of the Special Services Teacher, Mrs. White. The characters in this book were the Beothuks and animals such as the caribou that existed in their time. The illustrators for this book (and *The Gigantic Pitcher Plant* that the previous year's class created) were the students from Della Stanley's Canadian Studies Class at Mount Saint Vincent University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. They have been pen pals with my students for the past seven years. These two books were so good that Woodland Primary sent copies to Newfoundland and Labrador Premier Danny Williams. Premier Williams wrote to the students congratulating them on their excellent work. My students were very proud to have read their book to all the people in attendance at the ceremony.

The entire ceremony to commemorate Demasduit was beautiful. The Conne River Traditional Performance Group sang a beautiful and moving song about the Beothuks. The Waterloo Regional Police Male Chorus from Ontario also sang. Sagamaw Misel Joe of the Miawpukek First Nation in Conne River explained how the Beothuk story is an oral history and we have to ensure that the stories we know continue into the future for our children. He said the Beothuk people belong to all of us and their history is our history just as our history is their history. The ceremony ended with the unveiling of a plaque that will remain in Botwood to remind us of the history that we share with the Beothuk people. The background for the ceremony was the Bay of Exploits and you could almost visualize the Beothuks going up and down the bay in their canoes. The mayor of Botwood, Jerry Dean, summed up the way everybody was feeling when he ended his speech with, "I'd like to think that the friendly winds that are blowing today are a sign of forgiveness being blown from the heavenly breath of this lady on behalf of her people to let us know that everything is okay."

The students who attended the ceremony were thrilled to be a part of this tribute to Demasduit and the Beothuk people. Their class has been a strong voice for preserving Demasduit's and the Beothuks' memory and because of this commemorative ceremony they were happy to see that they weren't alone in their efforts. There were hundreds of voices at the ceremony that felt the same way they did.

All of this interest in trying to right the injustices shown to the Beothuk began with my Grade 2 class from the 2005-06 school year. They started collecting names on a petition to try to get the Mary March Museum in Grand Falls-Windsor renamed to reflect Mary March's real name, Demasduit. When Demasduit was captured in 1819 by John Peyton Jr., they gave her the common name Mary and March for the month in which she was captured. The following school year, students from my 2006-07 class picked up where the previous class left off. They collected more names and their MHA, Anna Thistle, presented all these names in the House of Assembly on their behalf.

The 2006-07 class also wrote letters to a local woodcarver, Howard Dornan, and he agreed to carve Demasduit's portrait in wood for them. The children were thrilled when Mr. Dornan visited their class with the wood carving which took him 50 hours to create. He explained to them that Demasduit was already in the wood and that he just brought her out.

The 2005-06 class were also instrumental in getting a unique two-faced rock in their town located in the Exploits River named after the Beothuk chief, Nonosabasut. He was Desmasduit's husband and was killed trying to protect his wife and newborn child.

In 2007, *The National* on CBC Television and *Sounds Like Canada* on CBC Radio teamed up to run a contest to find the Seven Wonders of Canada. I thought this would be a wonderful opportunity to promote this awesome rock. The 2006-07 class wrote letters to Shelagh Rogers, host of *Sounds Like Canada*, and nominated Nonosabasut Rock as one of the Seven Wonders. Ms. Rogers did a fabulous telephone interview with some of the students from the 2005-06 and 2006-07 classes. The students did an excellent job and to their surprise, out of over 18,000 nominations, Nonosabasut Rock was chosen for the top 52 wonders. Then it was up to the people of Canada to vote for the top seven out of the 52 wonders. These students brought national attention to this unique rock and the Beothuk people. CBC reporter, Peter Gullage, visited my class and the Exploits River and produced a fantastic video for *The National*. People from all across Canada had an opportunity to see students from both years making their case for why Nonosabasut Rock should be one of Canada's Seven Wonders.

Gail Collins from CBC Radio in Grand Falls-Windsor also visited Woodland Primary and interviewed some of the students for CBC Radio. The students were very busy trying to get the message out to as many people as possible to encourage them to vote for Nonosabasut Rock. They did an excellent job because they ended up with 8,563 votes for a rock that hardly anybody knew about until the Seven Wonders contest. The students weren't terribly disappointed when Nonosabasut Rock wasn't chosen as one of the Seven Wonders since the Sleeping Giant in Thunder Bay, Ontario (which received the most votes) wasn't chosen either.

Gordon Cave, the uncle of students Boston and Eden Bouzane, painted a beautiful picture of one of the faces on Nonosabasut Rock for the class. The children hope that this painting and the carving will be displayed close to Nonosabasut Rock some day when the town develops the riverfront.

A great spokesperson for the Beothuk people, Don Locke, also visited the students. Mr. Locke, an archeologist, has discovered many Beothuk sites along the Exploits River, the longest river in Newfoundland and the main waterway of the Beothuk people. As a result, he has learned a lot about the lifestyles of the Beothuk. Because of his wonderful work we are able to better understand this elusive group of people. Mr. Locke used to own the Beothuk Village by the Exploits River, close to Grand Falls-Windsor, where visitors could view his artifacts. My students enjoyed observing the various artifacts he brought with him during his visit to the school.

Don Locke shows Victoria Piercey (left) and Jason Hibbs one of his many Beothuk artifacts.

In Language Arts class, the 2006-07 class wrote letters to the Government of Scotland requesting that the skulls of Nonosabasut and Demasduit be returned to Newfoundland and Labrador where they belong. The skulls have been in a museum in Edinburgh, Scotland since 1827 when the famous explorer, William Cormack, took them from the Beothuk burial site where their baby was buried and carried them to Scotland. The students have not yet received a reply from the Government of Scotland but reporter Bob Smyth, who works at *The Sunday Post* in Scotland, wrote a wonderful article in the May 6, 2007 newspaper about their request.

This was a great learning experience and these students were great ambassadors for the town of Grand Falls-Windsor. Not only did this project teach them about the history of the Beothuk people, but it also helped them understand that they have a voice that should be heard.

If you want to find out more about Nonosabasut Rock and the Town of Grand Falls-Windsor you can visit the Woodland Connections website at www.k12.nf.ca/woodland/links.htm.

Anne Warr retired from her teaching position at Woodland Elementary in June 2007.

Tips for Principals

Facilitating the Bureaucracy-Learning Organization Interface

The following are excerpts from a research paper by Dr. Dennis Treslan titled *Facilitating the Bureaucracy-Learning Organization Interface: Tips for Principals*. A full copy of the research can be obtained from Dr. Treslan, dtreslan@mun.ca or (709) 737-2491.

Abstract

We live and work in a bureaucracy-dependent society where organizations reveal a bureaucratic presence through their structural frameworks. Schools functioning as learning organizations are also impacted by this bureaucratic presence. This paper identifies selected initiatives principals might utilize to facilitate the interaction between Weberian bureaucracy and the definitional dimensions of learning organizations proposed by Senge (1990). Hopefully, principals will consider these initiatives as tips for facilitating the bureaucracy-learning organization interface in their school.

Introduction

It is assumed that our society is a bureaucratic society in which no other form of social organization operates as effectively and efficiently. Since schools mirror their surrounding society, it is not surprising to find bureaucracy revealed in their structural frameworks. Currently, many schools are moving to what is considered a more effective modus operandi, namely, the learning organization. According to Senge (1990), these are settings "... where people continually expand their capacity to create results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to see the whole together". Since these schools operate in a bureaucracy-dependent society, they too must cope with a pervasive bureaucratic presence. This paper identifies selected administrative initiatives principals can deploy when managing a bureaucratic presence in schools functioning as learning organizations.

Weberian Bureaucracy

Accepted characteristics of Weberian bureaucracy are generally recognized by administrators as pivotal components of school management. Using division of labor and specialization, daily school operation is carried out through delegation of role responsibilities. Instruction is divided into primary, elementary and secondary emphases, with subjects classified as mathematics, social studies, music, etc. ...

...Schools emphasize equality in individual and group treatment along with facilitation of rationality in judgments made and acts performed. In this regard impersonal orientation mandates that decision making be based on facts rather than feelings. ...

...Effective school operation relies extensively on a hierarchy of authority. Each role is under the control and scrutiny of a higher office ensuring effective and rapid communication (primarily vertical). ...

...Rules and regulations abound in schools and are frequently used to define boundaries of behavior. Through the use of rules and regulations coordination is easily realized. ...

...It is also commonly understood that school employment is rooted in technical qualifications and certification, resulting in professional employees viewing their work as a career. ...

An issue currently facing many principals is simply this: How can schools when viewed as learning organizations deal effectively with a bureaucratic presence. More specifically, what administrative initiatives might be deployed to facilitate an effective bureaucracy-learning organization interface.

The paper discusses Schools as Learning Organizations and delves into managing the bureaucratic presence in a learning environment.

...Expanding capacity to create truly desired results entails addressing student and teacher learning needs in meaningful and novel ways. This can be realized by embracing experimentation and innovation within a framework of constructivism. Such action can also free up or relax rigid curricular guide-

lines, allowing new knowledge exploration and real world application.

Nurturing new and expansive patterns of thinking results in freeing learning from a prevailing cultural use of test criteria as the sole means of confirming acquired knowledge understanding. This action can pave the way for students working collectively or alone to acquire knowledge through questioning, examination, hypothesizing and conjecturing, with teachers serving as guides and textbooks as resources. These classrooms would portray new learning patterns based on collegiality, debate and inquiry. Since this learning might now result from induction supplanting deduction, it can be seen as an extension of experience, setting the stage for reconsidering knowledge acquisition and the nature of student-teacher interactions.

Freeing collective aspiration requires principals to modify rigid bureaucratic constraints defining school and classroom interactions. This can lead to reconsideration of the very nature of formal structure (e.g., rules and regulations; formality) in favor of individual-structural interactions as the core of the learning process, potentially resulting in student empowerment. For this to occur, communication must be barrier-free in order to effectively facilitate student-teacher-administrator dialogue.

Learning to see the whole together suggests the need for a supportive school environment in which to revisit learning because in a learning organization a new approach to learning is encouraged … The challenge is that since we really do not know how to learn, we need to learn how to learn together (i.e. learn to see the whole together). …

Conclusion

Bureaucracy is a very real component in all organizations, contributing to organizational structure and, if not successfully managed, constraining the effectiveness of organizational roles. For schools functioning as learning organizations there is a need to implement initiatives for facilitating the impact of Weberian bureaucracy. Principals will be responsible for setting in motion initiatives which not only harness the impact of this interaction, but also serve to increase overall school effectiveness. Those initiatives represent but a fraction of the activities that could be considered in this regard.

The fact that schools as learning organizations seemingly function so effectively suggests that a bureaucratic presence in these schools can be managed for the betterment of the school. The challenge for principals is one of recognition, understanding, innovative action, and willingness to change when dealing with this bureaucratic presence. Hopefully, principals will consider the initiatives discussed in this paper as tips for facilitating a bureaucracy-learning organization interface in their schools. In this way all might come to understand the basic rationale for learning organizations – "…that in situations of rapid change only those [organizations] that are flexible, adaptive and productive will excel. For this to happen, … organizations need to discover how to tap people's commitment and capacity to learn at all levels" – a poignant reminder of an administrative challenge confronting today's principals.

Dennis L. Treslan is presently a professor of Educational Administration in the Faculty of Education at Memorial University of Newfoundland. His research interests focus on educational politics, leadership, organizational theory and supervisory processes in education. He recently completed a ten-year term as Association Dean, Undergraduate Programs in the Faculty of Education at Memorial.

Did You Just See That?

by DAVE DYER

Do you remember when you successfully completed your driver's test? You accomplished the daunting task of passing a theoretical and practical assessment for your license. It was a time of both freedom and anxiety as you cherished how your physical boundaries opened, yet equally feared breaking the laws of the land.

It was pure self-control not to speed when certain songs played on the airwaves. These tunes mysteriously made your foot feel like lead. The need for speed suddenly possessed your being. You'd have to restrain yourself from the temptation to break the sound barrier.

Why do drivers generally abide by the rules? I'm sure there are a variety of answers to this question. I would suspect that the majority of people accept them because they are regulations set for the well being of society. It's the law and they follow the law, plain and simple. They know that traffic violators risk the embarrassment of getting a ticket, increased insurance rates and losing points on their license. Do law-abiding citizens feel sorry for someone speeding through a red light and then being pulled over by the police? Not likely. They probably feel a sense of vindication.

Imagine this: You're following society's traffic rules but notice that some other automobile drivers are ignoring them. Police officers appear be doing their job but sometimes infractions occur right in front of them and no official action is taken. It's true that officers try their best and catch almost all obvious incidents but the problem is that other infractions appear to be overlooked. You hear through the grapevine that not all police officers have the same interpretation of the rules. Would this be a concern for you?

Safety is on your mind. You would like to bring your concerns to the attention of the authorities but are a little embarrassed at how they will react towards you. You've heard that rule breakers have always existed in society and there's not much that can be done. Telling someone you have a problem might label you as a rat. If you speak up, will the police tell you to ignore those rule breakers and the problem might go away? Perhaps they'll advise you to talk to the other driver and ask them to stop this action.

A friend you know stays away from driving once or twice a month because it causes them too much anxiety when they're on the road. This action seemed to help the person but over time they've really fallen behind in their driving skills. There's a fear that they might quit driving all together. I've heard people say that some are just not meant to be drivers but I question this point of view. There must be a good reason why they don't drive.

The School Climate

As teachers and school leaders we are in an authoritative position. We run our own mini-community, which is a mirror image of the society we live in. We are the peacekeepers and community judges in this kingdom. We teach, preserve the good order of our students, and apply the "laws" of this microcosm.

The students parallel the community members who, although outnumbering us by a great percentage, are generally law abiding. They are like the automobile drivers in a community. Most will never break the main laws of the land but there will still be a few people out there who will feel that the rules were not written for them. These rule breakers will systematically observe which regulations are actively being enforced and which ones are overlooked. They will generally capitalize on the laws that might be overlooked.

Like the rules of the road, the school policies are there for a specific purpose, to make it a safe, effective, and functional environment in the school setting. If a student successfully breaks a school rule and bullies without detection, there's a high probability that another student is at the losing end of this conflict. They suffer the consequences of this infraction not being spotted by an authority figure. Consider how stressful this could be on a regular basis. The targeted student would be hard pressed to meet their academic potential under those conditions.

As educators we are the trusted experts in transmitting the safe school information to our students. Parents, guardians, and the general public expect that we know all facets of keeping a school free from bullying. They also expect that this message be regularly enforced. I'm confident that bullying incidents observed by staff members are indeed dealt with.

Primary support for this thought is that fighting is not tolerated in any school setting. It is dealt with through suspensions, parental meetings, and student assurances that this will never happen again. If teachers identify physical aggression they quickly curb it, explain its seriousness, and implement appropriate consequences.

Redefining Our Views

Teachers and school staff are doing an extraordinary job in detecting and preventing bullying incidents they see as they regularly intervene to resolve problems. One concern however is that the genre of bullying is often stated to staff members in an overly simplistic form; a power imbalance between two or more people where the action is designed to inflict physical or emotional damage on the target. A perplexing situation occurs here because power imbalances can take the form of verbal abuse, physical aggression, relational breakdowns, Internet slander, serial bullying, secondary bullying, and vicarious bullying, to name a few. This list is certainly not inclusive but it does highlight the varied spectrums of bullying.

If provided with additional training on bullying, would staff members reassess the gamut of bullying? Is the word "bullying" too simplistic to use when discussing the topic, considering the critical impact it has on students, staff, and the school environment? Taking the analogy of the successful driver, does the driving training manual only tell you to follow the rules or does the booklet detail them? It's obvious that the government requires all of society to follow the same rules when they are on the road for the sake of our safety. Should we consider doing the same thing in schools due to the complexity of bullying?

Bullying. This eight-letter word should be a concern for the professional learning community. As skilled educators, we should question how we personally classify bullying. Is there uniformity or diversity of thoughts on this issue in your school? Combating bullying effectively requires a collective voice from a staff. Like the Positive Behavior Support (PBS) system, it's the uniformity and consistency of rules for everyone that keeps a school environment running smoothly.

Share Our Expertise Regularly

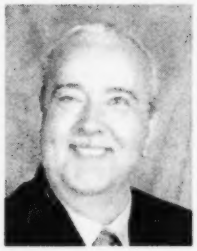
School personnel are really good at detecting the aggression they see. We could become even better at making the school setting less stressful for our students by acquiring more knowledge on bullying. The more you know about this topic, the more you realize how much you don't know. But with newfound information comes tremendous power... the capability of changing our student's lives. If we pick up on a bully's subtle aggression, the students we help will have a chance to regain their self-esteem. Remember most of the time victims remain silent and take the abuse. Being bullied is a demeaning experience and it's remembered long after the person has finished school. We can alter a person's school experience by knowing what to spot.

Imagine if the subtle bullying actions were going on right in front of us and we didn't even know it was happening? Students could be wondering why we weren't stepping in to help them. It's not usually the fault of the teacher but the complexity of the topic that's at fault here. There's so much to learn and observe.

It's true that a day in the life of many teachers, administrators, and support staff is a perpetual whirlwind of motion. We are often in sensory overload throughout the day attempting to complete tasks. Teachers are usually bombarded with a thousand questions from students as soon as they enter the school, attendance must be taken, and deadlines must be met. Throughout the day we are actively engaged in the school culture, sometimes to the point of exhaustion. Refocusing staff members to further engage in the topic of bullying on a regular basis might be a lot to ask, but it's worth it.

Picture if this student being slyly bullied and harassed was your child, your niece, or a family friend's child. Would you take the time to stop this abuse? Would you like teachers to be up to date on the not so obvious signs of bullying and intervene on your behalf? Of course you would.

Dave Dyer is a language arts teacher at St. Kevin's Junior High in Goulds, NL and has been actively involved in safe schools since 1999. Dave has a Masters of Education from Memorial University where he spent much time researching bullying. Feel free to contact Dave at daviddyer@esdnl.ca.



Thoughts on School Leadership

by SCOTT CROCKER

Students are individuals. They have different needs, capabilities, and aspirations. School leadership should strive to make all students feel how special and valued they are, from Kindergarten through graduation. Everything we teachers do in education has to center on students first, their learning and achievement. At the end of secondary schooling, students have to be capable of functioning successfully in society and contributing to that society. Following are some of my beliefs about leadership in education.

Leaders live by principles and beliefs obvious to colleagues, parents, students and others. They are evidenced by words, choices, and actions. Actions speak louder than words.

Leaders work in public education, compulsory, a right for all. Students can attend until the age of 21 years. Schools are places of learning that develop the 'whole' person.

Leaders manage K-12 schools where children and adolescents are taught. Students make mistakes; they learn. Making wrong choices, doing wrong things, is part of being a young person. Schools educate, provide alternatives, offer 'preventative' programs, protect safety and welfare, and reduce risk to students and others. It's 'learning by all' in a safe, caring, socially just environment.

Leaders seize difficult moments and make them 'opportunities', teaching students when they make wrong choices and/or behave inappropriately. Self-discipline is learned.

Leaders organize schools to teach students and subjects. Schools teach both, but most importantly, they teach children. They do it in a positive manner.

Leaders implement policies that protect students from harmful approaches. There is 'due process', pathways, individualized services, teamwork, and respect.

Leaders dismiss zero tolerance policies as simplistic, false solutions to serious problems affecting today's young people. Zero tolerance solves the school's problem.

Leaders recognize good teaching as critical to successful schools. Effective teaching is well planned, purposeful, outcome-driven; it engages the learner, it's inclusive, and recognizes diverse learning styles. It outlines clear expectations for student behavior, consistently. It promotes early, honest, non-judgmental dialogue with home to inform and seek support. Learning occurs in successful schools. Excellence thrives.

Leaders expect much of themselves and others. Schools are special places that require commitment from students, those who serve them, and the community.

Leaders celebrate student, colleague and school achievements.

Leaders are classroom teachers.

Leaders lead.

Scott Crocker is Principal of Holy Spirit High School in CBS, and serves as President of NLTA's CBS Branch.

Much to Celebrate

Prestigious National Fellowship for Grad

Greg O'Leary

English teacher Greg O'Leary has much to celebrate. Before beginning his doctoral studies Greg was an English teacher at Bishops College in St. John's as well as several other schools in the Eastern School District. The doctoral student at the University of Toronto was awarded a two-year Postdoctoral Fellowship from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) valued at over $80,000.

"I am not surprised that his work has been ranked so high nationally again. He has consistently been one of the top students in the country."

Mr. O'Leary, who has a BA (honours) and B.Ed. from Memorial, will work with Dr. Ken Stevens in Memorial University's Faculty of Education to research how students construct a social identity and a sense of place in their community, country, and the world, in part, through experiences with texts, pedagogical approaches, and educational discourses in school environments.

"The English curriculum, because it also provides the literacy for the study of other subjects, is central to this kind of research," explained Mr. O'Leary. "It becomes a formal expression of what we value as a society and one of the ways of encapsulating cultural knowledge and experiences for students.

"English as a subject was, in a sense, forced to develop in-between British, American, and Canadian currents of influence in Newfoundland, and I believe that massive changes to the subject in recent years can be better understood when situated within this larger historical context. It is important to understand how the subject changed in pre, post, and present day Confederation Newfoundland, and how this sense of being in-between might have influenced the students of these eras.

"Such research illuminates deep currents elsewhere in the field by raising new questions about student learning, teaching practices, and curriculum development in neocolonial educational contexts."

This is Mr. O'Leary's third national award. To date, he has received SSHRC's top funding in each of their three scholarship and fellowship competitions, awards totalling over $200,000. His recent postdoctoral fellowship received one of the highest scores in this year's national multidisciplinary competition.

As a result, he is currently one of the few students in the country to be nominated for SSHRC's Postdoctoral Prize, which will be awarded later this year to the most outstanding postdoctoral fellowship recipient across the disciplines.

"Greg's research offers a current, original, theoretically informed means of casting new light on the impact of postcolonial schooling and cultural practices, which has implications for a wide international audience," said Dr. Stevens. "I am not surprised that his work has been ranked so high nationally again. He has consistently been one of the top students in the country. I anticipate that we will push the boundaries of one another's research."

This item has been reprinted from an article by Dawn Roche in the MUN Gazette, Vol. 40, No. 11, March 13, 2008.

NUTRITION INSTITUTE

July 7-9, 2008

Corner Brook. Hosted by the Department of Education. The focus of the three-day institute is on skill development for teachers who work in a food laboratory environment. Priority will be given to teachers of Nutrition 2102/3102. Expressions of interest should be directed to ellencoady@gov.nl.ca.

ATLANTIC CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF SCIENCE EDUCATORS (ACASE) AGM AND CONFERENCE

July 10-12, 2008

St. Mary's University, Halifax. Theme: *Science Engages "Energy"!* For further information go to www.acase.ca or contact Craig White, craigwhite@gov.nl.ca, Tel: 709-729-2614.

2008 GENOCIDE EDUCATION INSTITUTE: GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP THROUGH GENOCIDE EDUCATION

August 11-15, 2008

Toronto, ON. Presented by the Canadian Centre for Genocide Education, B'nai Brith Canada, Humura Association, and Canadians Against Slavery and Torture in Sudan. Featuring Barbara Coloroso, internationally recognized speaker and author. Teachers learn with some of Canada's most renowned scholars and long-time educators of genocide and will have the opportunity to meet survivors of genocide. The Institute is designed to encourage teachers to teach the lessons of genocide and to help prepare them to effectively and appropriately communicate these lessons in the classroom. In addition to learning about genocide generally, teachers will examine four case studies: Armenia, Holocaust, Rwanda, and Darfur. Morning sessions focus on developing the theoretical and historical background; afternoon sessions focus on classroom implementation. Teachers receive many resources for their work ahead, including several books to begin a library of their own. Cost: $350 (Early Bird Registration: May 31 - $295). Registration Deadline: June 30. Register at www.genocideeducation.ca. For more information email inquiries@genocideeducation.ca. ***Note:*** Teachers who have completed the Genocide Education Institute will be eligible for the Rwanda Travel-Seminar in August 2009 to mark the 15th anniversary of the Rwandan Genocide.

ONSITE 2008

August 14-20, 2008

Gros Morne National Park. ONSITE '08 is a week-long professional development opportunity for Environmental Science and Social Studies teachers led by Parks Canada staff and facilitated by representatives from the Department of Education and the NLTA. Environmental Science teachers will explore and experience the habitats and ecosystems of Gros Morne National Park. Social Studies teachers will have an opportunity to visit the Parks Canada sites at Gros Morne National Park, Port au Choix, St. Anthony, L'Anse aux Meadows, etc. Participants will receive full funding from the Department of Education. For further information contact George Tucker, NLTA Administrative Officer (PD Division), Tel: 709-726-3223 or 1-800-563-3599, ext. 245; gtucker@nlta.nl.ca.

KINDERGARTEN INSTITUTE

August 25-27, 2008

St. John's. Hosted by the Department of Education. Using play-based approaches in the kindergarten classroom to achieve curriculum outcomes. Sessions will include puppetry, a kindergarten classroom makeover and incorporating mathematics in the KinderStart program. Expressions of interest should be directed to Michelle Coady, Primary Program Development Specialist, Department of Education, michelleacoady@gov.nl.ca.

EECOM 08 CONFERENCE

September 25-28, 2008

Gros Morne National Park. An Environmental Learning Gathering: Reconnect, Rethink, Rejoice. Approximately 300 Environmental Educators from across the country will attend this three-day event. Keynotes: Father John McCarthy, Bob McDonald and Sarah Harmer. For more information visit www.eecom.org.

4TH ANNUAL CHARACTER EDUCATION CONFERENCE

November 3-4, 2008

Deerhurst Resort, Hunstville, ON. Pre-Conference: Dr. Eva Olsson, Barbara Coloroso, Dr. Terry Scott. Keynote Speakers: Stephen Lewis, Michael "Pinball" Clemons, Dr. Hal Urban. For further information visit www.ncec.ca.

TEACHING WITH THE BRAIN IN MIND

November 6-7, 2008

Delta Conference Centre, St. John's. Internationally renowned 'brain-based learning' guru and educator Eric Jensen will be presenting this two-day workshop entitled "Teaching With the Brain in Mind". Further details on cost and registration will be available in the near future. For further information contact George Tucker, NLTA Administrative Officer (PD Division), Tel: 709-726-3223 or 1-800-563-3599, ext. 245; gtucker@nlta.nl.ca.

Dates to Remember

May 2008

May 7	**Deadline:** Notification by Board of layoff
May 11-17	Branch Election Week
May 15	**Deadline:** Professional Development Fund applications

June 2008

June 6-7	NLTA Executive Meeting
June 15	**Deadline:** Notification by board of acceptance/rejection of Deferred Salary Leave requests
June 19	**Deadline:** Professional Development Fund applications

July 2008

July 31	**Deadline:** NLTA Scholarship Applications